



Black and *Pink* Newsletter

A U G U S T 2 0 1 0 I S S U E

BLACK AND PINK—NEWSLETTER, C/O COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON,
565 BOYLSTON ST, BOSTON, MA 02116

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Insight for 2
trans sisters, I
love you, ok?

My story while 3
I sit, in this seg
cell, Hope in
the future

A few words 4
of encourag-
ement, Hi,
Helplessness

Hang in there, 5
Once upon a
time,
Not my job

I'll be here, 6
Black & Pink
Artwork

Thinking about 7
gender identity &
8

Update on 9
Arizona's racist
bill

In the time of 1
"the breaking of 0
nations", Can
you write to
other prisoners?

Dear friends,

The newsletter that you are reading through right now has passed through the hands of many different people. Reed, the most incredible editor and Black and *Pink* organizer extraordinaire, likely touched it first as he printed it at MIT in Cambridge. Following Reed could be any number of incredible volunteers who gathered at the Queer Women of Color and Friends karaoke and activism night. On the outside it takes many volunteers to make it possible to get this newsletter done and your words shared with one another. What is incredible is that our movement is ever growing and people are continuously learning to care and step up when it comes to queer and transgender people locked up behind bars. It is because of your bravery and strength that people on the outside are able to move forward and act to build a movement.

Next month the newsletter will include some information about how we are hoping to become more accountable to you all, truly listening to and following your leadership. Our role is to be allies to you all in as honest a way as possible. As we continuously strive to abolish this system in its entirety we must also take time to advocate and organize for the immediate relief necessary for those living within the system right now. While I sit in an ice cream shop and write this letter on my laptop I am very clear about what it means for me to feel my autonomy; my capacity to make decisions about my own existence. I am wondering when each of you feels your sense of autonomy. Massachusetts continues to have an epidemic of prisoner suicides, an action that some people have said is the only time prisoners are able to make decisions for themselves, the ultimate decision of death. Is that the only time people who are held captive by other human beings can feel strength? I am hoping not.

Ryan Harvey wrote in, "Ain't Gonna Come Today," "We might not see the outcomes/Though we might see the clues/But when you plant a seed/It's gotta grow before it blooms." Each time a prisoner writes a story or piece of poetry about the violence of the system and gets it out for others to read, another seed is planted. Each time a prisoner gives another prisoner a selfless gift out of the canteen, expecting nothing in return, another seed is planted. Each time a prisoner wins a lawsuit against the prison or forces even a minor change in the day-to-day living behind bars, another seed is planted. Each time a same-gender-loving/queer/gay/trans/lesbian/bisexual prisoner falls in love and forms a mutual relationship with another prisoner, another seed is planted. Each time a free thought comes to mind or a moment of spiritual uplift occurs, another seed is planted. We are all trying to grow this garden of resistance together and it takes an endless number of seeds to be planted to make that happen. Just like a garden needs attention and regular care, we each need that as well. We need to figure out how to nurture one another even as the system works to keep us separated and disconnected. This newsletter strives to be a way to plant those seeds more and more. What are ways you imagine we could do that more effectively? How can this newsletter be a better tool for our garden?

As we figure out what changes and adjustments need to happen to this newsletter we will continue doing the best that we can on the outside. There are a number of prisons that keep denying our newsletter and we will fight that, for as Laura Whitehorn said many years ago, if the prisons say "homosexuality" is not permitted within the prisons, then all "homosexuals" should be released immediately! The prisons are more than welcome to release all queer prisoners, but until that happens we will keep sending our "promotion of homosexuality" into the prisons. We will also talk to those prisons who consider this newsletter "correspondence between prisoners" as this is a free publication, not direct correspondence. We will keep fighting side by side with you!

And as always, once there were no prisons, that day will come again!
In loving struggle - Jason

Insight for transgender sisters

Dear Black and Pink Family,

I applaud and appreciate all the help and attention that you are focusing on transgender women in prison. As a transgender woman in prison, I know first hand the experience of verbal and mental aggressive treatment that is bestowed upon transgender women. My heart goes out to Valjean Royal (June 2010 issue) and all the other transgender women who have been sexually assaulted within the prison system. Because of our complaints and our experiences, most jails and prisons won't tolerate us, they would rather isolate us in ad-seg confinement and take all privileges away from us. I'm experiencing this as we speak. I'm allowed out one hour a day without having the same privileges as the other inmates, all because I'm a transgender woman. This is not fair, but because I'm transgender, no one cares. I'm praying that the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission will come up with a solution to this problem without hurting us even more and leaving us to solitary confinement to do our time which isn't fair.

But we must also do things to keep ourselves and remember to always carry ourselves in a womanly manner and not send any type of mixed signal to other offenders that might lead them on, or make them feel we are vulnerable to them.

One day there will be a prison designed for transsexuals and homosexuals but until that day comes we must take advantage of any mental health programs that are available to help us raise our level of self-esteem so that we may learn to love ourselves even more and learn to stay out of jail or prison. We must always remember we can ask for protective custody before they force it on us.

I hope my letter will bring some insight to some of my transgender sisters in the struggle, together if we fight we can overcome this negative experience. Thank you so much Black and Pink family for being a sounding board.

-Alison Thomas

B&P says: We stand with you Alison! We admire the strength of all survivors, and we of course support what people need to do to stay safe in prison. We also work to prevent sexual assault regardless of how we dress or act, and for the day when we don't need to consider building separate prisons, because all the closet and prison doors are open!

I love you, okay?



This is Joseph Barnes. We that are all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender should be confident in our identity. It shouldn't matter if society doesn't accept us, who are they to judge and look down upon us? They are no better than us. The same God that put them here, put us here too? So right there we are of some significance in a divine manner. Don't allow anyone to rob you of your humanity. Love who you are. I embrace everyone from all walks of life. That's the way all people should be. But we don't live in a perfect world. I used to be ashamed of my bisexuality. But then I thought why should I allow a bunch of air-heads to determine who I am as a person? Not at all they will no longer exercise that kind of power over me ever again. And now I am open about my sexuality, and I encourage you to do the same and experience true freedom. If no one told you that they love you, I'm telling that I love you, okay? I hope this letter helps you.

-Joseph Barnes

My story while I sit in this seg cell

Thanks for your latest issue and/but I must comment and wish Andy McNeil good luck in taking on those sordid people both at his "camp" and the Courts. His psychological strength will be needed to accomplish this miracle "winning".

Let me tell you/him my story/experience while I sit in this segregated cell. Not long ago I too filed a suit a section 2254 prose for the following: I've done many years in the Texas prison system and had many fights because I'm different and also defend others who are. The Unit where I was hired a gang intelligence officer who decided to start hating on me, abusing his position. Since I couldn't fight him to get him off me I filed those useless grievances this GI told me he was going to make my life hell. Soon he had the whole administration hating on me and gang members he played favoritism with. We got into a fight, these members and I, and all of us were put in Ad/Seg. This GI lied/fabricated everything needed to keep me in Ad/Seg where I'm at now.

While being in Seg, Officers have put feces in my food. They have fabricated disciplinary violations against me, they have assaulted me handcuffed, put my enemies and I together so we can fight. Back in Ad/Seg I go through everyday verbal assaults, defamations etc. In the middle of all this making matters worse I lose my Mom, the only one who was supporting me.

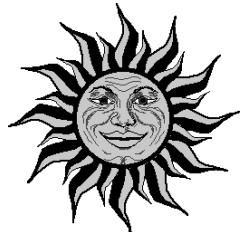
After being denied grievances, I filed this 2254 suit and the only money I had saved in my prison account was taken by the Federal District Court for filing fees. I didn't have a chance in the preliminary, the magistrate was another sordid friend to the conspiring officials in this Unit and Region. My honest/strong case was dismissed by her as frivolous and any/all following appeals were denied.

So now I'm still in Seg having to defend myself verbally and any other way that might arise. I'm broke with no support and not even a pen-pal. As everyone knows a mother's love is never ending, but even that has been taken from me.

-David Trevino



Hope in the Future



My future is at hand, full of hope and wonder.

An open lea of wildflowers-opportunities-lie before you, so you must take the first step.

The anticipation of failure is much worse than the failure of not doing nothing at all.

It's one thing to know your limitations, and quite another to hide behind them.

We must hold to our desires for a better life, a future beyond our wildest imagination, a future of epoch proportions.

My eyes have seen that which lies before our very eyes, so we must reach out and grasp what is ours.

A life of joy and happiness, to be what our hearts have always desired, Successful Beings.

-Joseph Franks (Jade)

A few words of encouragement

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to offer a few words of encouragement to those of you who are just beginning a prison sentence or just going through some hard times.

I started my prison journey in 1975. I was sentenced to a life sentence with the possibility of parole. I was sent to the state penitentiary here. It was known as the Gladiator School and it lived up to its name. I was not from this state so I was a lost soul so to speak, a babe's in the woods. I was advised to do as the Romans do, so I did. During this period in time if you were perceived as gay or a queen you were then

“Believe; believe in the promise of tomorrow.”

considered as property and were used as the owner saw fit. But nothing stays the same, not in prison, not in life. Realize this! Three years ago I was able to have the d.o.c hire an expert in the field of gender. The assessment was made and I was diagnosed as suffering from G.I.D. and was placed on hormone therapy. I went up for parole on the 8th of March, I am still waiting for an answer from this parole board, and it looks very good that I will make it this time around. I have a special friend who loves me to death and treats me like the lady I am. I have friends who have stuck by my side and supported me in my transitioning. When I first entered prison I never gave in to despair even though darkness was all around me. I've seen some terrible things here and I've seen some heart warming things too. I've seen life in all of its stages. It's been 35 years in here. I'm going to be 57 in a few months and I am a happy gal regardless of everything that I've gone through. Believe; believe in the promise of tomorrow. Better days are ahead of you. I need to somehow find the funds that I need to get my surgery done. It's a little over \$21,500.00 and I don't have 2 cents to rub together. But I have faith that somehow, someway, I will find the funds that I need. I've waited a lifetime for the opportunity to correct being in the wrong body and it won't be as long as it has until I can get the work performed.

I hope that these words have inspired you to keep in mind that things are not as bad as they once seemed and it is getting better every day. Hold your head up and keep your face to the sun. I love you all, Toni

Tell everyone I say Hi and much love to their beautiful sexuality and strong nature of who they choose to be and live which is Happy and Content! <3 Maurio

Helpless

Restless have been my nights of late. Endless dreams of torment-a shroud of darkness curtains over me. A marionette on the evil strings of the puppet-masters pull. Helpless to stop its control over me, will this endless show of torment ever end.

Darkness has taken me, lost in the shadows of my own thoughts, an evil realm of love and hate. Joy and pain, loneliness and sorrow. I am helpless, like the falling leaves in their season. Carried away by the Northern winds, helpless by all means.

Unable to men by broken spirit, I suffer. My tears flow like the endless Nile, into a cascade of never ending sorrow. I cry out! To a higher power, but I am turned away. Good cannot endure within an evil heart, so I am left to die by the wayside.

-Joseph Franks (Jade)

Hang in there

There once was a convict who
 Was biding his time
 Trying to practice gentleness, patience
 Being humbled and kind
 He would play with his bugs
 And even consider them his friends
 He was almost at the end of the tunnel
 Trying hard just to keep wits end
 There's plenty of peers
 That can be put on one's mind
 And it takes a strong person
 To put it all behind
 So, hang in there Glider
 And just do your very best
 Then release it to the Higher Power
 And lay it at rest
 -Glider

Once Upon a Time

Once upon a time, I had the strength of a lion
 And once upon a time, my blood was pure, so clean
 I felt like a ray of sun, full of light
 Full of life
 But once upon a time I was dead wrong
 Non saddened in despair
 Tears of mine unable to speak but
 Perform in silence
 Once upon a time I did not foresee
 My mistake
 In solitary confinement, a prisoner
 The victim of circumstances
 For happily ever after not. As the end
 Can't never be avoided
 Looking out of my window at night as I
 Wait for terms of death
 When will they be here, how long will
 I wait
 Once upon a time I thought I would live
 A long life
 -Mikee

That's Not My Job

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job... Everybody thought Anybody could do it, Nobody realized that Anybody wouldn't do it... It ended up the Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done and that was to love me for who I am!!

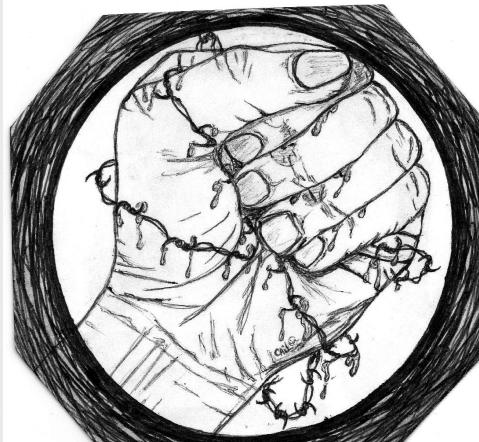
-Play Madrigal AKA Ghost!



William Fiessinger



Kory Hunziker



Cameron "Cail" Willett



Joseph Barnes



Kory Hunziker

It's not my time
 It's not my year
 This isn't my place
 Perhaps...
 I'm not even here
 To love hurt
 And embrace a sickness
 Is to play correct
 Is to shun fickleness
 There's no changing it
 So why not embrace it?
 One way streets and mirrors
 Force you to face it
 The stuff we fear
 Placing here
 Then over here
 Where's the right spot?
 Who are we today?
 Why are we tomorrow?
 Forever waiting
 Constantly
 Infinitely unaware that
 this time is borrowed
 -Brandon

I'll be here

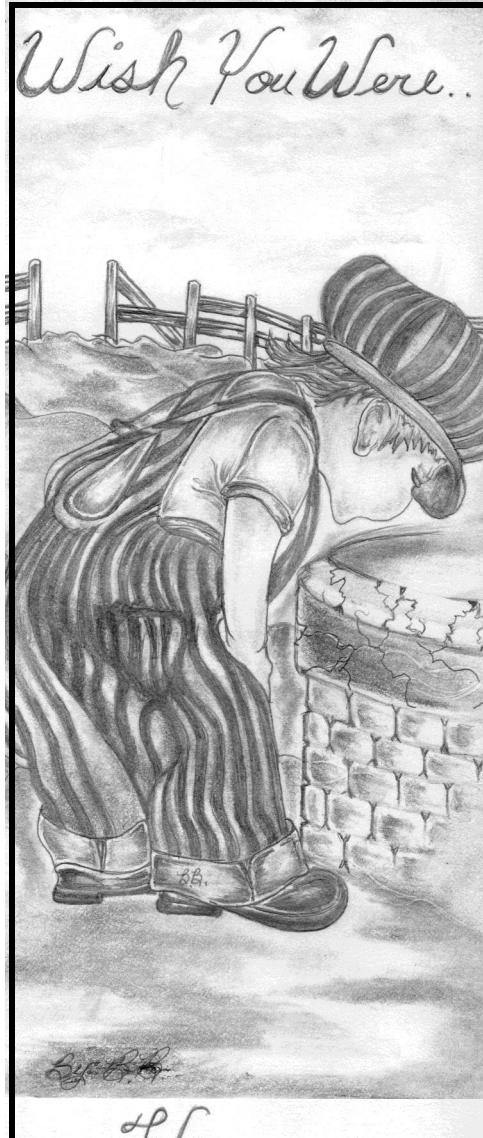
I'll be here
 In your time of need
 I'll be here
 When you begin to plead
 I'll be here
 When life starts to speed

I'll be here
 If no one else will
 I'll be here
 When you get ill
 I'll be here
 So let your troubles spill

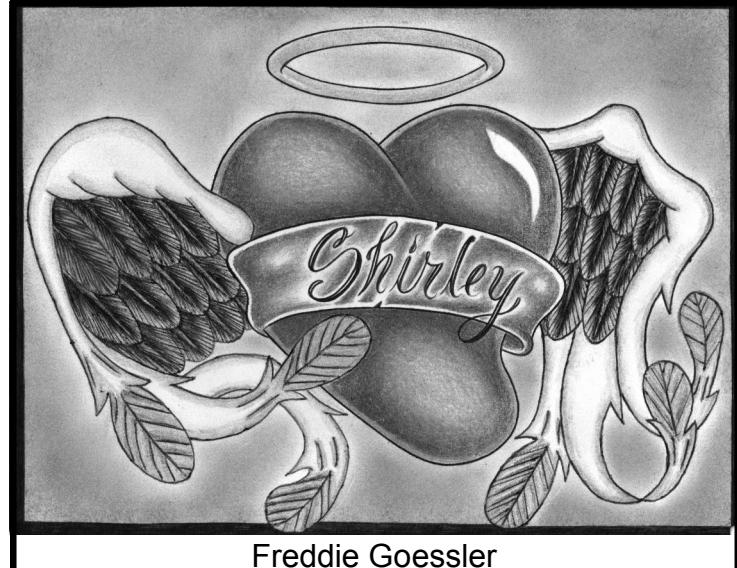
I'll be here
 As your friend
 I'll be here
 When your allies will pretend
 I'll be here
 At the very end

I'll be here
 When your numbers are few
 I'll be here
 When you need me to
 I'll be here
 For you my friend this is what
 I do.

-Paul Smith



Bobby Brown



Freddie Goessler

Thinking about Gender Identity

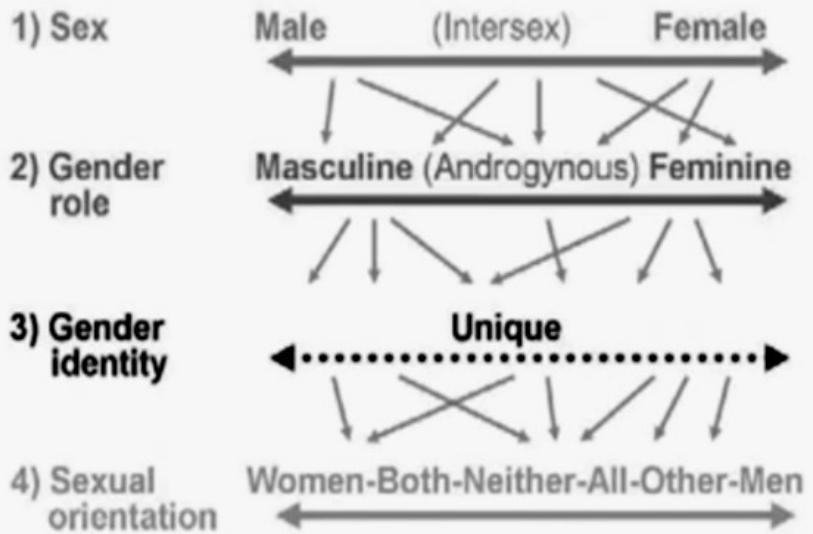
Gender Identity:

Our gender identity is how we see ourselves. Some of us see ourselves as women, some as men, some as a combination of both, some as neither. Some of us have complex identities that may even be fluid and change over time. For instance, some of us see ourselves as female to male trans people who also identify as butch women and genderqueer and some days as drag queens.

Everyone has a gender identity. And, everyone expresses their gender identity. We all make choices [Reed's note: if you are able to] about how to cut or not cut the hair on our head, the hair on our legs, what clothes to wear, whether or not and what type of make-up to wear, what body parts to accentuate or not, etc, etc. We all make hundreds of conscious decisions every day about how we are going to express our gender. We all have a gender.

Transgender Basics - Gender Identity Project (GIP)

Adapted from Samuel Lurie Authentic Gender Model



Transgender People:

Transgender people (very broadly conceived) are those of us whose gender identity and/or expression that does not or is perceived to not match stereotypical gender norms associated with our assigned gender at birth. In other words, people think that we should be more masculine, more feminine, not have facial hair, have facial hair, not have wombs, have wombs, identify differently, etc., etc.

And, a note on the word transgender: Some of us who fit the above definition do self-identify as transgender, and some of us don't. We are a community with an evolving language. What is key is that everyone has the right to SELF-IDENTIFY. When in doubt about how a person identifies or what pronouns a person prefers – ask nicely and politely. It is very important to respect each person's self-identification. For instance, it is not respectful to challenge someone's gender identity.

Reed's note:

Hey friends! Just wanted to make sure that folks know how to properly address folks (some have gotten it wrong in recent letters). Not all transgender people are comfortable with the word "tranny", it is a word that some have "reclaimed" and think that people in the community can use, some people take it as an insult.

Female-to-Male=FTM=Transman, Male-to-Female=MTF=Transwoman (refers to current, not past, gender)

Continued from Page 7

Diversity within the Transgender Communities

Transgender people span all communities, are of all backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and abilities. Transgender people have all sexual orientations. Gender identity is about who one is. Sexual orientation is about who one is attracted to. Some transgender people are straight, some are gay, some are bi, and some are queer.

Transgender people have an enormous and beautiful gender diversity. Among transgender as among non-transgender people, there are feminine women, masculine women, androgynous women, feminine men, androgynous men, masculine men, to name just a few. There are infinitely different ways to be male and infinitely different ways to be female. And there are infinite ways to be neither. One term to describe those who do not identify as completely male or female is genderqueer. (But, not all people who do not identify as female or male self-identify as genderqueer – and some people who do identify as female or male do self-identify as genderqueer. Again, it is important to respect each person's self-identification.)

Options other than female or male: There are transgender people who identify as trans, tranny, trannyboy, trannygirl, transsexual, transgender, shinjuku boy, boi, grrl, boy-girl, girl-boy-girl, papi, third gender, fourth gender, no gender, bi-spirit, butch, dyke-fag, fairy, elf girl, glitterboy, transman, transwoman – just to name a few. Some of us see ourselves as combining aspects of male and female. Some of us see ourselves as falling between male and female. Some of us fall completely outside of the binary gender system. Some of us have the same gender always and everywhere; some of us are fluid, and of us change situationally or over time.

And, a little note on spectrums and lines. There are women and there are men. These are two options among a million. Female and male are not two endpoints on a line. There is no line, no spectrum. If there were a line, where would a sissy ftm fall compared to a butch dyke? Where would a butch mtf fall? Where would a fierce femme fall? Gender is much much bigger than a line. We cannot order people on a scale of masculinity/femininity. Gender is (at least!) a 3 dimensional space that allows motion. One way to picture gender is as a gender galaxy – a space with an infinite number of gender points that can move and that are not hierarchically ordered.

Bodies:

In addition to the enormous variety of identifications, there is an equally impressive variety of bodies. We all have bodies. We all alter our bodies in some way. Some women have wombs, some do not. Some men have facial hair, some do not. Some male to female transgender people identify as one-hundred percent female and never take hormones or have any surgeries. Transgender women define for themselves what it means to be female and to have a female body. Some female to male transgender people take male hormones and have mastectomies and yet do not identify as men. Some do. Some mix and match to best express their very own fabulous gender. Some take hormones but have no surgery or vice versa. Some take low-doses of hormones or go on and off. For some trans people, altering genitalia is important. For others, it is not. Some transsexual men identify as 100% male and choose to become pregnant and bear and raise children.

There is no prototypical transgender experience. There is an endless variety of transgender bodies, an endless variety of transgender identities, and an endless combination of the two. It is not necessarily those who take low doses of hormones who identify between male and female. It is not necessarily those who take hormones who identify as transsexual. It is not necessarily those who have genital surgery who identify as 100% male or 100% female.

Further, there are endless ways to arrive at being transgender and of being transgender. Some transgender people are assigned female at birth, know from day one they are male, describe their experience as being a man trapped in a woman's body, and live their life as a heterosexual man. This narrative is perpetuated, reinforced, and rewarded by the medical and psychological establishment. Many transgender people share only some part or no part of this narrative. Many transgender people live happy lives prior to transition. Not all transgender people feel uncomfortable in their bodies and want to alter bodies. Not all transgender people have the same identification throughout their lives. Endless narratives exist.

Prepared by Jody Marksamer and Dylan Vade, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, srlp.org

Update on the Racist AZ Law

Protests are happening in Arizona and across the country against the new anti-immigrant law (Arizona SB 1070) that went into effect at midnight on July 29th. "Four protesters brought downtown Phoenix to a standstill Wednesday night after scaling a construction crane to unfurl a large banner reading "Stop Hate." At least fifty people were arrested in Arizona Thursday in protests against the state's new anti-immigrant law. [Celebrations] were also held in parts of the state after a federal judge blocked key parts of the law, hours before it went effect. The parts of the law blocked included a provision that would have required police officers to stop and interrogate anyone they suspect is an undocumented immigrant. The ruling came in response to an injunction requested by the Obama administration which argued in a lawsuit that the law was unconstitutional and warned the provisions would result in racial profiling. Many residents of Arizona say the law would target Latinos.



Black & Pink Pen-Pals Do a Cheer Against SB1070 in Boston



Judge Bolton said in her thirty-six-page decision that it was "not in the public interest" for Arizona to enforce provisions that preempt federal enforcement of immigration law. Also put on hold were parts of the law requiring foreigners to apply for or carry certain documents, making it a state crime for undocumented workers "to solicit, apply for or perform work," and mandating verification of the immigration status of any arrested person prior to release. Bolton ruled the partial injunction should apply until the issues are resolved by the courts.

The ruling meant that other portions of the law, known as Senate Bill 1070, took effect on midnight. Among them are provisions that prohibit state authorities from limiting enforcement of federal immigration laws, a provision that makes it a crime to impede traffic by picking up day laborers, and a part of the law that creates misdemeanor crimes for harboring and transporting undocumented immigrants. "

Despite some parts of the bill being temporarily blocked, resistance against the entire law and all racist immigration laws continues. B&P expresses solidarity with all those affected by these laws. No person is illegal!
-Adapted from Democracy Now!

In the time of “the breaking of nations”

Only a man harrowing clods
 In a slow silent walk
 With an old horse that stumbles and nods
 Half asleep as the stalk

Only thin smoke without flame
 From the heaps of couch-grass;
 Yet this will go onward the same
 Though Dynasties pass

Yonder a maid and her wight
 Come whispering by;
 War's annals will cloud into fight
 Ere their story die.

-Douglas Stucin



Greeting cards by Jay Martin

SEND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS TO: **BLACK AND PINK- NEWSLETTER**

SEND PEN-PAL REQUESTS TO: **BLACK AND PINK- PEN PAL**

SEND ART RELATED LETTERS TO: **BLACK AND PINK ART- REED MILLER**

**THANK
YOU SO
MUCH!**

C/O COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON
565 BOYLSTON ST
BOSTON, MA 02116



CAN YOU WRITE TO OTHER PRISONERS?

Introducing the trial P2P (Prisoner to Prisoner) List

We recognize that many of you would like to write one or more pen-pals, and that some of you have been waiting for a while to make that connection. We know that many people can get in trouble for writing with other prisoners, and we sure don't want to get you in trouble by accident. We suggest checking with the mailroom, prison policy handbook, prison officials, or wherever makes sense for you, before you sign up for this separate prisoner-to-prisoner list, which involves writing to and receiving mail from other people in prison.

Please tear off this slip and mail to:

Black & Pink-P2P List, Community Church of Boston, 565 Boylston St, Boston MA 02116

Name _____
 Address _____

Number _____

Ad about yourself (write neatly plz!) _____

